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1903.

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

REV. F. A. WALKER, D.D., F.L.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The SECRETARY (Professor EDWARD HULL).—I have first to express the regret of the Council, in which I am sure you will all join, at the inability of the President to be here this evening. He is far from well, and he says it is quite impossible for him to come to London, which he much regrets.

The following elections were then announced :—

LIFE MEMBERS :—J. S. Phené, Esq., LL.D., F.S.A. ; Miss Alice M. Whidborne.

MEMBERS :—John F. W. Deacon, Esq., M.A. ; Arthur W. Sutton, Esq., F.L.S. ; The Trustees of the Bermuda Library, per Lieut.-Gen. Sir H. Geary (Governor).

LIFE ASSOCIATES :—Rev. R. Ashington-Bullen, M.A., F.G.S. ; Rev. Rupert S. Strong, B.A. ; John Alexander Strong, Esq.

ASSOCIATES :—The Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Honduras, D.D. ; Rev. Prof. G. A. Barton, Ph.D. ; George A. Manwaring, Esq., C.E. ; Rev. Oswald J. Hogarth, M.A. ; Rev. William E. Emmet, M.A. ; Charles W. Odling, Esq., C.S.I. ; Ronald Hamlyn-Harris, D.Sc., F.L.S.

HON. CORRESPONDENT :—Dr. Ion Stephansson.

The following Paper was then read by the Author, entitled :—

THE FUTURE OF ISLAM.

By Professor D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, D.Litt., Laudian Professor of Arabic, Oxford University.

THE eminent statesman and historian J. Bryce, in his recent Romanes Lecture,† expressed the opinion that Islam might perhaps last only a couple of centuries more; he regarded this not only as possible but probable. His opinion seemed paradoxical, and some persons even fancied that he had been incorrectly reported. For from a superficial view of the situation it would scarcely seem to be justified. The number of Moslems in the world cannot be precisely ascertained, but from such statistics as can be procured, it would appear to approach 200 millions.‡ Their religion is dominant in Africa,§ partly dominant in Asia, and not unknown in Europe or even America. Nor does its power of expansion appear to have run

* Monday, January 5th, 1903.

† Oxford, 1902, p. 45.

‡ In the *Statesman's Year Book* for 1902 about 150,000,000 are noticed in the lists; but some of the figures are too low, and many must be omitted. Krinskiy, *loc. citand.*, p. 108, says 300,000,000.

§ A book by L. C. Barnes bears the title, *Shall Islam rule Africa?*

dry, and, especially in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, there were many movements in Asia and Africa which seemed to promise it new life and extended conquests. A writer* who framed a careful survey of the Mohammedan world in 1888, declared that in India and China, Islam only develops, whereas the other native religions are in decadence, while those introduced from Europe barely exist. It was asserted by a leading Orientalist† that Islam must at some time become the religion of the whole of India; and great accessions of converts, said to have adopted Islam in order to be freed from the caste-system, were adduced as proof of this. A form of this prophecy appears as late as 1899, in the Asiatic studies of Sir Alfred Lyall,‡ who states that individual conversions are still frequent, though the extension of Islam has naturally slackened with the rapid decline and dilapidation of the political dominion with which the faith was at one time bound up; he holds, however, that it may yet be the destiny of Islam to provide India with a national religion, while acknowledging that it is fast losing the chance of doing so, which, if neglected, will not recur. In China the growth of Mohammedanism in recent years was such as to cause alarm to European observers,§ who feared that China might be the source of a fresh crusade against civilization in favour of Islam. Those fears have not as yet been near realization; yet so recent a writer on China as A. Colquhoun|| warns his readers that Mohammedan discontent in that country may break out into a blaze. In India, China, and the Dutch colonies, where Islam is also said to have made great progress,¶ proselytism was in the main carried on by peaceful methods; in Africa it was carried on partly by peaceful methods, but also in many places by force. Mohammedan progress on an enormous scale is reported from various parts of that continent; but since Lord Kitchener's victories in the Sudan, that progress is said to have been checked, if not entirely arrested.** Yet other movements, even after the crushing of Mahdism by the British, seem still to continue, and are occasionally depicted in the language of alarm.†† Although then writers of very recent date declare that

* Chatelier, *L'Islam au XIXme Siècle*.

† Von Kremer: see Krimskiy, *Mohammedanism and its Future* (Russian), Moscow, 1899, p. 106.

‡ p. 321.

§ Sell, *Essays on Islam*, p. 204.

|| *The Overland Route to China*, 1900. ¶ Krimskiy, p. 107.

** Atterbury, *Islam in Africa*, p. 182.

†† *Saturday Review*, Aug. 16, 1902, p. 193.

Islam is still making gigantic strides,* it is probable that there is less evidence for the statement now than there was fourteen years ago. Still it would not appear that Islam had ceased to grow, or was (in numbers at least) beginning to decay.

On the other hand, the paradoxical opinion which has been quoted is shared by many observers. A missionary who had worked for many years in Asia Minor, writing in 1870, prophesied that Mohammedanism would probably melt away like a frozen iceberg before the gradually increasing light of modern science, of civilization, and of Christianity;† that its doom was fixed, and the wisdom of men will consist in executing the sentence without haste and yet without hesitation—whatever he may have meant by this last phrase. Some Arabs affirmed, with complete indifference to the able Dr. Pruen,‡ that when the Turkish empire is destroyed Mohammedanism will become a thing of the past—and few persons give the Turkish empire a lease of 200 years. In the observations with which Lenz closes the narrative of his journey to Timbuctoo,§ he declares that Islam can subsist only when left to itself, and that contact with European civilization means death to it. It would not be difficult to cite other passages to the same effect; while it would be equally easy to quote opinions to the effect that Islam has an indefinite period of time before it.

It is not my intention to criticize these opinions, nor indeed can the course of events in the future be very well criticized. It is however admissible to *comment* on the opinions quoted, in the line of examining what is meant by the disappearance of Islam, and of analysing the elements of disintegration which, in the opinion of some observers, are so likely to lead at an early period to the destruction of the whole fabric. For this study I can use a few observations of my own, made in short visits to Mohammedan countries; but to a much larger extent those of Europeans whose residence in the East has been more lengthy.

A certain ground for believing in the speedy disappearance of Islam would be found, if it could be shown that in the struggle for life the equipment which it provides is less efficient than that furnished by Christianity, Judaism, and some other religions. This is indeed asserted by some writers,

* Krimskiy, *l.c.*

† Van Lennep, *Asia Minor*, 1870, i, 283.

‡ *The Arab and the African*, p. 258.

§ *Timbuktu*, 1892, ii, 376.

and certain phenomena seem to bear it out. The author of a prize essay,* published in 1881, on the influence of Islam on the life of its professors, called attention to the fact that at Constantinople intellectual capacity, where it was required, was chiefly provided by Christians, whether native or European. "The steamship lines in the Levant belong to Greeks, Armenians, French, Austrians, Russians. The Osmanli fleet is under the direction of English officers. In the Turkish land-army Prussian, French, and English officers have important posts. The railways are built by English, French and German engineers. The telegraph lines in Turkey are managed by Poles and Italians." Twenty years later, Mr. Dwight,† writing in 1901, declares that the same condition prevails. "The Moslem masses are hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are bearers of burdens, they are donkey drivers, they are the smallest of small traders, they are artisans whose tools compete with their hands in clumsiness. The Turkish army depends on foreign Christians for its organization as well as for its arms and ammunition; and to a considerable extent for the instruction of its officers. The treasury would go to pieces if Christian counsellors were not at the side of the minister of finance. Rarely does a wealthy Turk venture to keep up an establishment without a Christian to manage his accounts. A Mohammedan banking-house is almost unthinkable. The most important book-publishing houses for Mohammedan literature are owned and operated by Christians." The same probably holds good of the other cities of the Turkish empire. In the towns of northern Persia, where there is a native Christian by the side of a Moslem population, the Christians will undertake none of the lower forms of labour, and indeed require a higher rate of wages than the Moslems. In the villages of the same region those in which there is a majority of Christians are obviously the more prosperous. Mr. Dwight accounts for this fact by certain of the doctrines which he attributes to Islam. They give the reason for "the failure of Mohammedanism to progress in lines of effort which make for prosperity and benefit the world. In them is the explanation of the battered old houses and the dilapidated steamers, and the squalid swarm of incompetent labourers found in the

* Fischon, *Der Einfluss des Islam auf das Leben seiner Bekenner*.
† *Constantinople and its Problems*, p. 50.

city until the skill of non-Mohammedans is brought in to supply the lack."* If this were so, *i.e.*, if the characteristic and essential doctrines of Islam led to inefficiency and incapacity, we might prophesy that with the struggle for existence constantly growing more acute, as the room for expansion becomes smaller, Islam must wholly change so as to become unrecognizable, or both ostensibly and really disappear. There are, however, reasons for thinking the question more complicated than the able writer who has been quoted supposes. In one part of the world, where neither Mohammedans nor Christians were subject to the influence of Europe, and where the former were subordinate politically to the latter, in Abyssinia, competent observers declared the Mohammedans both morally and intellectually superior to the Christian population.

According to Ruppell,† writing in 1838, the Abyssinian Mohammedans were more industrious, better educated, and, in consequence of their own exertions, far more prosperous than the Christians of that country. The same judgment was passed by the traveller Von Heuglin,‡ in 1868. The judgment passed on the Christian inhabitants of Mohammedan countries before the active interference of Europeans is often exceedingly harsh.

It would be possible to adduce many other facts which render it improbable that the profession of a creed has in itself much to do with prosperity or efficiency—probably it has some influence, but there is a tendency to overrate it. Other causes must then be sought for the state of things described by Pischon and Dwight. And some of these are obvious. Community of religion with the nations of the West brings resident Christians into closer relations with the dominant nations of Europe, and they prosper not as Christians but as Westerns. Similarly that accurate exponent of the affairs of Morocco, Budgett Meakin,§ assures us that the treaties assuring protection in that country to the native agents of foreign officials and merchants have been taken greater advantage of by Jews than Moors; the Jews having ties with Europe which the Moors lack, and also being better acquainted with the necessity for those treaties than are the Moors. It is asserted that in

* p. 81.

† Ruppell, *Reise in Abessinien*, i, 368.

‡ V. Heuglin, *Reise in Abessinien*, p. 253.

§ *The Moors*, p. 460, *cf.* Cunningham Graham, *loc. citand.*, p. 51.

Persia fear of the European press assures the native Christians better treatment than is accorded to the Moslems, about whose wrongs the press of Europe cares not. Vámbéry, writing in 1875,* further accounted for the prosperity of Christians at Constantinople by their exemption from military service, and so being enabled to pursue their industries continuously, whereas the Moslem workers were liable at any time to be interrupted.

Besides these explanations it may be remembered that during the history of the Caliphates of Baghdad and Egypt offices of trust and importance were frequently committed to Jews and Christians, partly on the ground that they were more under the control of their masters than co-religionists who could claim equality; and partly because the disabilities under which they laboured had necessarily caused them to develop energies and talents which the ruling caste had no occasion to employ. This policy has never been altogether abandoned by Mohammedan rulers, as the most modern experience testifies; but if the motive for their employment of Christians in offices of trust were examined, it is unlikely that even a dim consciousness of the superior business capacity of a Christian would be admitted; at most they might grant that in times when business and politics had gravitated to the West, those whose religion brought them in touch with Westerns were most likely to be intelligent and sagacious in their dealings with them.

My own experience of Mohammedans, as I believe that of many travellers, tells of many honest and industrious workers, of men of high character and principle, with most of the qualities that succeed in the business life of Europe. The theory of Vámbéry, who insists constantly on the difference between the European and the Asiatic, seems to me more in accordance with the facts than that which finds the difference in aptitude between the Moslem and the Christian; and there is much that is attractive in the view of Schuyler and others, according to which the difference between Eastern and Western capacity is one of development: the Moslems of the less visited countries standing on the level of Europe in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, when this country was still backward, but, unless we alter the meaning of words, was Christian. The chief evils of Moslem countries are ascribed by Vámbéry to bad government, and bad systems of government, and this too

* *Der Islam im 19ten Jahrhundert.*

seems to agree with the facts. It is rather curious that those who find in the Moslem religion the source of Moslem incompetence, often paint either the native Christians or the European residents in blacker colours than the Moslems; indeed the books which deal with modern Constantinople treat the European residents with no sort of charity or mercy; and both travellers and missionaries in Africa and Asia are apt to describe the influence of the European as merely corrupting. Since these Europeans represent men of ordinary or average character, and by no means the scum of the communities whence they emanate, it seems hard to make Islam responsible for the backwardness of the one class of the population, without making Christianity responsible for some, at least, of the peccadilloes of the other. While then the theory that Islam is to blame for the backwardness of Mohammedan peoples is not to be rejected entirely, the degree to which it is true is so exceedingly uncertain that it is difficult to be sure of the disappearance of the system in the struggle for existence. It may account in part for the dilapidated steamers of the Turkish empire; but there are other causes which contribute to their dilapidation.

What, next, is meant by the disappearance of Islam? Many writers have asserted that Christianity must certainly take its place. The Christian powers, says Lenz,* represent civilization and progress. Islam is identical with stagnation and barbarism. Many other writers, especially, but not exclusively, missionaries, could be quoted to the same effect. Some, such as Schweinfurth,† appear to hold that Christianity is the only remedy for Mohammedan countries, but despair of its ever making way.

It certainly seems unlikely that two or even three centuries will see the transformation of the whole Moslem world into a Christian world, whether we accept the evidence of facts or look to the working of principles.

Of Christian missions to Mohammedans at present the most that can be said apparently is that they are not complete failures. Of those at Kashgar the eminent explorer Sven Hedin‡ says, "their energies are wasted, their labours fruitless, their lives empty, hard, and of none account." Of the three missionaries whom he saw, one, who had laboured for ten years, had never made a single proselyte; indeed, he had made no

* *Loc. cit.*

† *The Heart of Africa*, ii, 435.

‡ *Through Asia*, i, 237.

serious attempt at conversion. Nor were the others more successful. A missionary in Syria, who recently published a narrative of adventures, left the impression that he had been no more fortunate.* On the other hand, it would appear that occasional conversions are known in Persia, even on a large scale; and of persons who were virtually Christians though professedly Moslems I heard a good deal; in some cases these would appear to be quite desirable accessions, though not in all cases. Dr. Adams† speaks of Babism having in some cases served as an intermediate stage between Islam and Christianity, and there is no improbability in this. In India conversions appear to be fairly common, though perhaps not more than sufficient to counterbalance transference in the opposite direction. Of the effect of missions in North-West Africa we read rather contradictory accounts. Atterbury‡ quotes the report of a missionary in Morocco to the effect that accessions had been constant, and that every one baptized had renounced Mohammedanism; making it appear that the rule which makes apostasy a capital offence had been relaxed in that unprogressive country.§ The inference was drawn that Christianity had a better chance against Islam in a country which had no brilliant period of Mohammedan civilization to look back to than in countries like Syria and Egypt, or India, where the religion was associated with a rather glorious history. The evidence of other travellers makes it appear that this statement about conversions in Morocco on a large scale must have proceeded from momentary enthusiasm rather than from a calm survey of the facts. The talented lady who writes under the name of Frances Macnab, and who perhaps is rather wanting in sympathy with missions, declares in her charming book on Morocco|| that not a single convert is ever made. Mr. Cunninghame Graham, in his interesting work on the same country, which bears date 1898, speaks in the style of Frances Macnab.¶ “Christ and Mohammed,” he says, “never will be friends; their teaching, lives, and the conditions of the different people among whom they preached make it impossible; and even the truce they keep is from the teeth outwards, and their respective followers misunderstand

* *Spectator*, Aug. 16, 1902, p. 231.

† *Persia by a Persian*, 1900, p. 467.

‡ *Islam in Africa*, p. 172.

§ This is also attested by Meakin.

|| *A ride through Morocco*, 1902.

¶ *Mogreb el-acksa*, p. 25.

each other quite as thoroughly as when a thousand years ago they came across each other's path." This writer is one of those who regard the effect of Christian agencies among Mohammedans as wholly injurious. From no quarter of the mission field does it appear that there is anything like a turn of the tide in the direction of the adoption of Christianity on any considerable scale. And since in many regions agencies have been maintained for many years, it seems improbable, on the evidence of facts, that the merging of Islam in Christianity is to be looked for in the future.

There are also certain *a priori* grounds which make in the same direction.

The first of these is to be found in recent developments of Christianity, which are likely at some time or other to render missionary effort exceeding difficult, if indeed they do not either suppress it altogether, or absolutely remodel its character. Without doing more than allude to this subject, we may observe that the conception of conversion as the exchange of one system for another must be vastly altered if it be no longer possible for the missionary to hold in his hand a sacred book as a substitute for the sacred book to which the Moslem professes allegiance: if the case of the Koran against the Bible, so far as it is negative, be held by the missionary to be proved. What will exactly be meant by a proselytizing mission, when the growing aversion to dogmas and definite beliefs which is characteristic of our age has reached its climax, it will be hard to say; hence the notion of the conversion of the Islamic world to Christianity would defy analysis if we had grounds for supposing the future of Islam to lie therein.

In other words, the polemic between Mohammedans and Christians will of necessity assume a different shape to that which is embodied in classical works of controversy, when the aggressive polemic of the Mohammedans has virtually received the assent of the Christian world; and that this is likely to be the case would appear from the trend of opinion in Europe.

But even before this radical change in the attitude of Christianity towards religious books and religious dogmas has become universal, the work of missionaries is seriously hindered by the competition of rival agencies, and the bickerings between antagonistic sects. At Urmi, besides the Nestorian natives, no fewer than four branches of European Christianity have established missions, at times at open variance with each other; and both here and elsewhere the relations between the native Christian sects are apt to be anything but cordial—cases.

in which the intervention of the Mohammedan authorities is required are not uncommon. The effect of these scenes on the Mohammedan spectators is detrimental to the Christian cause, since the Koran declares dissension to be of the essence of Christianity, and destined to adhere to it till the last day. On the other hand, the presence of rival missions at work among the native Christian communities is said to weaken their attachment to the hereditary religion, and while raising their intellectual level, to be of little use for the maintenance of Christianity even among them.

And thirdly, missionaries have ordinarily some difficulty in gaining access to Mohammedans at all. The agents stationed in Persia and Asiatic Turkey ordinarily abstain from all attempts to convert either, because their rules forbid them to make any, or because such attempts could only lead to the abandonment of their ostensible work, while failing to produce any effect on the Moslems. In several of the places where Mohammedans are subject to Christian governments missionary work is prevented or discouraged by the authorities; and this practice has the approval of some observers, who find that the absence of any endeavour on the part of the government to shake their faith, leads to the diminution of fanaticism and accomplishes automatically part of the work which the missionaries would endeavour to achieve. These and other considerations justify us in the opinion that the transference of large masses of Mohammedans to Christianity is not an operation at all likely to be realized in any space of time which it is reasonable to contemplate.

Other writers speak of a general awakening of Islam, and twenty-five years ago Mr. Schuyler* declared that such an event seemed near, though he knew not whether it would be beneficial or otherwise to the human race. It might be asserted that this prophecy had come after the event; the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had already seen awakenings of Islam on a great scale. Such were the Wahhabi movement which engulfed Arabia, and advanced as far as Damascus†; the Babi movement, which threatened to overrun Persia; the Mahdist movement, from the effects of which the Sudan has just begun to recover. The home of many of these sects has been Arabia; some are professedly waves of the mystic or pantheistic doctrine which has

* Schuyler, *Turkestan* i, 172.

† S. M. Zwemer, "The Wahabis," *Journ. Vict. Inst.*, vol. xxxiii, p. 311 (1901).

repeatedly shaken Islam, whereas some have been free from it; the world has seen what they can effect when successful, and what becomes of them when they fail. In regarding their founders as re-incarnations of Mohammed these sectarians have a plausible case; for in the greater number of cases these organizers appear to follow the lines laid down by Mohammed with little variation. Instinctively or by study they have mastered that principle of Oriental statescraft in virtue of which men will not readily follow a leader who invites them to pillage and massacre directly, but will readily follow if they are invited to these acts indirectly, as acts whereby a religious doctrine can be furthered, or the true nature of the deity be generally made known. Wahhabism and Mahdism had a great run of success, and the consequences to Arabia and Africa are well known. The restoration of pure monotheism which was the watchword of Wahhabism turned Arabia into a more howling wilderness than it had been before. From the brilliant narrative of Palgrave and the earnest pages of Doughty we learn enough about the character of its leaders and its results to know that it was merely a revival of savagery, containing no element of permanence, and in every way inferior to the Islam of established states. A whole series of authorized works paint Mahdism in its true colours; no greater service was ever done to the cause of civilization than when Lord Kitchener proved that the machine gun was more than a match for an Eastern prophet. The life of the founder of Mahdism in the Sudan, as told by Wingate, gives the standpoint whence the whole series of prophets from Mohammed onwards can be best appreciated; the prophet commences as a saint; after a little success the mask is thrown off, and the career which the prophet's ambition had anticipated in fancy begins to be realized. So soon as the plunder that is within reach has been exhausted, the leaders become divided, and nothing but misery ensues.

Greater value has been assigned to the Babi movement in Persia, round which, owing to the violent measures by which the Persian government endeavoured to stamp it out, a halo of romance has arisen. Of the Bab and his followers many accounts have appeared in English, those by Dr. Sell in his *Essays on Islam*, and by Dr. Adams in his *Persia by a Persian*, being the latest. From these and other accounts it appears that Babism was no more than any other religious movement in the East dissociated from political ambitions; and the

Syrian last mentioned expresses the opinion,* which I know from other sources to be well grounded, that had Babism succeeded it would have been as rabidly persecuting as any other of the sects which have arisen in Islam. A Babi informed me that it would tolerate no religion besides itself; and it would seem that the Christians are taunted with blindness in failing to see that the prophecies of their Bible are realized in the Bab, just as they were taunted by Mohammed for their obstinacy in refusing to identify him with the Comforter promised by St. John. So far as the doctrinal content of Babism is concerned, even admirers in Europe acknowledge its puerile character; the fact that it gives a year of nineteen months is sufficient to show how far the founder was alive to the practical needs of mankind. The general character of the teaching does not appear to differ in kind from that of the Sufis or mystics who have enriched the literature of the Mohammedan languages almost from the commencement, and the literary output of the existing sect seems decidedly outdone in originality and depth by that of the mystics of the sixth and seventh centuries of the Mohammedan era. If their standard of conduct was at any time free from the chief evils attending the Mohammedan system, it is difficult to assert that the amelioration was either considerable or permanent in character; and at quite an early period in the history of the sect they took to settling their internal differences with the aid of the poisoned bowl and the dagger, the style in which Mohammedan dissensions have been settled from Mohammed's time to that of the Wahhabis. Under the present ruler of Persia they exist as a sect that is tolerated provided that it keep in the background; and the errors committed by previous rulers in making it popular by too rigid persecution will probably be retrieved by this sagacious policy.

In the work by Dr. Adams, to which attention has been called, there is a translation of an interesting correspondence between the Babi community in America and the headquarters of the sect at Acre, from which it would appear that acquaintance with the New World is rapidly influencing the sect, in such a way as to change it from a dangerous form of fanaticism to something like one of the comparatively harmless religious revivals, which, not unconnected with mysticism, have repeatedly taken place in the States. One of the writers assures the

* *Persia by a Persian*, p. 467.

Turkish government most earnestly that "the intentions of Our Lord and His followers are only religious and have not the least connection with politics." But when in another document the same writer calls his master "the One into whose hands the kingdom has been delivered and the reins of government have been placed, and for this reason he who disobeys his commands disobeys the commands of God," the Turkish authorities may be pardoned for mistaking their intentions.

Both this writer and others, including such an authority as Lord Curzon, accept the statements made by Babis of their numbers, which according to them should include something like an eighth of the population of Persia. These estimates should be received with some caution, and it seems unlikely that the movement is gaining ground at the present time, even if it is not being displaced by something newer. Even in the East systems which are mainly mystic in character, though attractive to more minds than in Europe, rarely have any power of permanently interesting any number of persons whose approval is of importance; they resemble the rich food which the mature palate rejects for what is more homely, but more nourishing. The new systems which spring up within Mohammedanism are compared by Schweinfurth in a rather brilliant passage* to the showers which occasionally enliven the desert, but effect no alteration in the character of the soil. There is no trace of a movement within Islam having taken place in the nineteenth century which has not its exact analogue in the earlier history of Islam; those movements have, according to circumstances, attained small or large dimensions, have led to much bloodshed or only occasional assassinations, have been forcibly suppressed, or have expired of themselves; the utmost they have been able to effect is the production of some literary monuments of interest, and those of the nineteenth century appear to have been unable to effect even this.

The point from which speculation on this subject should start is the well-known fact that the political ascendancy of Islam is fast disappearing. In 1870 it could be asserted that two-thirds of the Mohammedan world was governed by non-Moslem nations; in 1902 the proportion is nearer five-sixths. Great Britain governs about a half of the Moslem world; Russia and France account for a large slice of the remainder. The states that remain independent are in constant dread of being

* *The Heart of Africa*, ii, 434.

absorbed. The recent event in Fez, where the murderer of a Christian was dragged from an inviolable sanctuary and publicly executed without delay, illustrates the fear felt in barbarous regions of Islam lest any provocation should accelerate invasion by the irresistible Frank. But though the date cannot be precisely calculated at which the last shred of political power is taken from Islam, the course of events seems to presage that it will not be distant.

Such a state of matters was never contemplated by either the prophet or his followers. God had, they thought, determined that Islam should have the upperhand over all religions; the world was to be divided into a Moslem caste, who should rule the others; a caste of adherents of tolerated religions; and a caste of unbelievers who were to be exterminated. The sacred war was to be maintained till Islam had engulfed the world. In out-of-the-way parts of the East this prophecy is supposed to have been fulfilled. But even from early times there were exceptions to the rule that the Moslems everywhere should be the ruling section of the population; and in the present day the portion of the world in which there is any room for the development of Mohammed's scheme is vanishingly small. Islam, if it is to exist, must learn, as Christianity has learned, to divorce itself from political ambitions; and the greater part of its law has to give place to one based on the principle of treating all men as equal.

A large portion of the Islamic code is of course abrogated at once—its unjust dealings, its barbarous punishments, its senseless restrictions. If slavery be an essential part of Islam, that essential element is also doomed to destruction; each year finds the pursuit of the trade less practicable. The study of the portions of the code which deal with these matters becomes therefore an academic study, as harmless as the Jewish study of the four modes of execution which the Sanhedrim may order, where there is no Sanhedrim with any power of ordering them.

But does it follow that the content of Islam left is insufficient to constitute a religion when civil government has forcibly abrogated large portions of its code? Probably one who regarded a Mohammedanism that was shorn of slavery, polygamy, and fanaticism, as no Mohammedanism, would be justified in thinking that we are near the end of the system; but one who looked only to historical continuity, and disregarded even vital alterations in an institution that was historically continuous, would fancy Islam has still a long life before it. For the results of present experience appear to show

that even when shorn of its characteristic institutions it can retain enough to satisfy such need of religion as ordinarily enters into the life of an individual or a community; and that the loss of some of the privileges of the system when it was victorious does not result in its followers either abandoning it, or adhering fanatically to the precepts that remain.

Of slackness of nominal belief in Islam it is easy to quote evidence from many parts of the world. Mr. Schuyler* observed that owing to the exclusion of missionaries from Tashkent Moslem observance had become lax; and since, owing to the action of the Russian government, compulsory attendance at mosques has been abolished, attendance is rare. The customary ablutions and performances which are called prayers are getting into desuetude. Dr. Pruen† testifies the same for East Africa; in Palgrave's time it held good of Arabia itself, but there would appear since his time to have been some movements in the opposite direction. In Egypt and India it is not difficult to find Moslems who make no concealment of the low esteem in which they hold the rites that their ancestors prized, though they have no intention of leaving the Moslem community.

The question whether the European standard of conduct and principle is making any way in these communities is of great importance, and it is especially of interest to compare the statements of modern observers with those made a generation ago by Vámbéry, whose practical acquaintance with Moslem countries was unique. In his charming work on Islam in the nineteenth century he gave a history of the attempts that had till then been made to introduce European civilization into Turkey, Persia, and the Mohammedan East, and he told the reader not to condemn the Mohammedans prematurely as incorrigible, because these attempts had in the main been failures. In spite of the gloomy character of the narratives in that work, and the author's harsh condemnations of the methods and abilities of the Oriental reformers, the reader is less struck by their failure or their incompetence than by their number and their earnestness; if the Turkish and Persian rulers failed to make their countries European, it was clearly not for want of trying, though, like those who attempt to draw, they may have made many unsuccessful drafts in attempting to get a resemblance. In reading very recent works on Turkey the

* *Turkestan*, i, 182.

† *The Arab and the African*.

reader finds that in some matters at any rate, which when Vámbéry wrote no progress had been made, the present condition exhibits very decided advance. Thus Vámbéry declared that the ideas of Europe never got beyond the Salamlik, or reception room; that the Turkish womankind were absolutely unaffected by the reforms, and he supposed the reforms must always remain superficial, because the earliest years of the lives of the men were spent in the society of mothers who were rigidly conservative, and to whom all things European were objects of contempt and detestation. A lady who wrote on Constantinople in 1895, Clara Erskine Clement,* testifies that Turkish ladies now study music, language, embroidery, and other feminine accomplishments; and the same is admitted by Dwight in the yet more recent work from which quotations have been made. In native Turkish novels the ladies are made to perform brilliantly on the piano, and to speak French with ease and discourse on European literature. A distinguished Turkish authoress,† Fatimah Aliyyah, in the preface to one of her translations from the French, speaks of this style of work as a departure in accordance with modern ideas, and hopes that she may be imitated by her countrywomen. This lady has composed some novels of her own, and has also given her countrymen some more serious literature, including a biography of philosophers. Feminine authorship has at all times been more common in Mohammedan countries than would naturally be supposed; it is however interesting to be able to hit on a point in which Vámbéry's Constantinople was certainly behind the city of to-day. It would also appear that the literature in circulation among readers of Turkish, not only at Constantinople, but in the provinces, compares favourably with what we should find in the bookshops of a European capital or provincial town. From what I have been able to see of the works employed for instruction of the young, Vámbéry's severe criticisms on the unpractical and reactionary character of the instruction would not now be justified.

For social regeneration I look to the working of one particular evangelist—one that may appear strange in this context, but yet of considerable efficacy. That is the French novel. In Turkey it is well known that the French language is studied with enthusiasm, and those who obtain government appointments of any importance are ordinarily accomplished

* *Constantinople*, p. 253.

† *Maram*, A.H. 1307.

French scholars. Hence some sort of acquaintance with French literature appears to be common in educated circles, and books of criticism mainly dealing with French literature are published in Turkish and widely read. Such works assume an acquaintance on the part of the reader with the literature whose beauties they point out, or whose characteristics they analyse. French novels are also translated in masses into Turkish; somewhat on the scale in which they are rendered into Italian: and owing to the cheapness with which books can be produced from Oriental presses they are widely read. Thus at a Turkish bookseller's it is possible to procure not only translations of those works which are regarded as part of the literature of Europe, but also of works of fiction of ephemeral interest, which, as those who are acquainted with such works are aware, have a tendency to follow rather stereotyped lines. With the immediate moral effect of these works I am not at present concerned; nor with the taste which they represent. But what is important is the state of feeling on domestic matters which they assume; the condition of the society on which they are based and which they doubtless faithfully portray. That condition is the outcome of centuries of Western civilization, absolutely distinct from the Mohammedan system, which, as instituted by the founder of Islam, differed only for the worse from that of idolatrous Arabia. The romance which fills the *feuilletons* of the Turkish newspapers, which provides the literature of entertainment and repose, is the romance as the European conceives it, of which the environment is the European family, with its ideas of women and men which differ so utterly from those which were realized in the capitals of the Umayyads and Abasids, and of the Osmanli's before the introduction of French influence.

When the Turkish stylist endeavours to imitate the same style, he is compelled to adapt himself to this European environment; without it it is impossible to obtain the motives by which scene can be made to follow scene, and complication to lead to *dénouement*. The institutions of Islam have in a way to be strained, ingenious combinations have to be devised, in order to permit of the construction of a romance in the French style at all. It must also be remembered that much of the French literature that is translated is from the prudish point of view absolutely unobjectionable: it is of value in respect of the morals which it is intended to inculcate, not only in virtue of the environment which it necessarily assumes. It is rare that religious motives enter into this literature; what it assumes is not so much the standard supposed to be inculcated by a church,

as the standard which fashionable society at the great European capitals is thought to recognize. Hence we find original Turkish romancers introduce into their own civilization such European inventions as the bride's white satin dress or the wedding tour. The Turkish lady of these ideals is made to possess the accomplishments of the European lady of fashion; the standard of etiquette is gradually transplanted from the West to the East.

For several purposes what is fashionable is of greater consequence than what is right. It is possible that many of these books are what Horace would call *peccare docentes historiarum*; but the standard from which they are intelligible is the European standard of what is right and wrong; whereas the state of society assumed in the native romances perpetuated by the Arab storytellers is the barbarous standard of the Caliphate. The French novel appears to be performing the tremendous service of revolutionizing taste in the Turkish empire, by representing the social conditions which we connect ordinarily with Islam as barbarous and unknown to the fashionable world. In the Turkish and Arabic literature that proceeds from the pens of Mohammedans who have allowed themselves to be taught by Europe, the advance on the style of older times is as great as that which the English literature of the present day exhibits over that of the eighteenth century. Probably other European literatures are now exercising their influence besides that of France. Since the interest taken by the German empire in Turkey, German literature has begun to penetrate there also; and the works of English writers are also invading the East in Turkish or Arabic dress. The works by which the people are morally educated are everywhere those which they read for pleasure, in which the instruction is conveyed without intellectual effort, and the perusal of which neither constitutes a study nor interferes with work. And from the education of the Mohammedan world by the novel literature of the West, radical reformation may be expected.

Lastly, it remains to be seen whether Islam will be able to claim for its own what it derives from Europe; whether, as has sometimes happened, the discoveries in ethics which are the product of experience, will be able to be represented as the outcome of the national religion. Mr. Schuyler, the excellence of whose judgment his readers have often occasion to admire, points out with justice that art and science, which we now associate with Christianity so closely, were at one time regarded as its enemies; and so seems to regard it as con-

ceivable that Islam may one day be not only reconciled with them, but even become their protector. We might similarly point to the insurance office being now regarded as an institution likely to be found in a Christian country; and yet the notion of providing to the utmost of our ability against any contingency that could befall us on the morrow, might seem to violate essentially the precept which forbids us to take any thought for it. At a recent Oriental Congress a Turkish gentleman read a paper proving that religious toleration was from the first the watchword of Islam; in a popular life of Mohammed there is a chapter headed "Islam not propagated by the sword"; and ingenious writers have made the prophet himself an advocate of monogamy. From the point of the student of history these propositions are indefensible; but where a biography is what is called dogmatic, where the actions of a man are regarded as the pattern for other men's, and where reverence for a particular name constitutes a mass of political capital, it is more important for the race that his life should be really exemplary than that it should be faithfully recorded. What shocks us about the earliest biographers of the prophet is that they are so truthful; they produce a picture that is entirely black, and fail to draw the obvious inference that such a man deserves little but reprobation. The newer biographer, who has learned from Europe what a pattern of conduct should be like, paints his prophet in a style that brings him near that pattern; he hopes to make him the patron of the newly-discovered virtues, just as moral and metaphysical speculators of earlier times made Mohammed the patron of their business. These efforts at re-writing history are not to be discouraged, though with advancing years men choose living models of conduct rather than those of which the traits are blurred by antiquity.

If the transformation of Islam into a patron of purity, toleration, intellectual and artistic originality, be equivalent to the destruction of the system, it is an end which, though far from realization yet, by no means lies out of the direction which Islam in some places at least is taking. Yet the course of events so often stultifies the most careful forecasts that it can only be suggested as one of many possibilities, but probably as that which will require the smallest amount of violence for its realization.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, we have had the great privilege and pleasure of listening to a very able and learned address on the "Future of Islam." I think, by your applause, you have anticipated the proposal I was going to make—that we should give a hearty vote of thanks to the distinguished lecturer.

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE.—I beg to second that proposal. I think we have all been highly delighted with this deeply-scholarly, thoughtful, and well-reasoned paper.

[The vote of thanks was then put to the meeting and carried by acclamation.]

The SECRETARY.—I have received several written communications on the paper.

We have received communications from Chancellor Lias, the Rev. G. F. Whidborne, Dr. Chaplin, and Dr. Klein. It would be impossible to read them *in extenso* without unduly curtailing the time for the discussion. They will appear in the next volume of "Transactions."

Professor ORCHARD.—The learned author has, I am sure, put us all under an obligation by this valuable and thoughtful paper on a very important subject.

I notice that he refers to the opinion of von Kremer, "that Islam must at some time become the religion of the whole of India." That may be the opinion of von Kremer; but I think it is not shared by those who have the opportunity of forming correct conclusions on the subject. Certainly the Rev. G. T. Manley, by his mathematical training and also, still more, by his experience as a missionary, is entitled to be listened to on this point, and he does not share that view. Quite lately he has pointed out that the Hindus themselves do not fear the Moslems being so numerous; but their belief is that the Christians, though comparatively a small community, are a real danger, and they look with apprehension to the possible spread of Christianity. Of course it is true that the number of converts is small. That, no doubt, is very much owing to the fragments of truth in the Mohammedan creed. They have the grand truth of monotheism. That is one reason why it is so difficult to make converts from them.

Then, again, I notice the author points out another cause which has had some effect, and that is, as he says, "in several of the

places where Mohammedans are subject to Christian governments, missionary work is prevented or discouraged by the authorities." That is undoubtedly the case; for instance, in the North-West Provinces of India, where a friend of mine is working, they are very much hurt by the action of the authorities in regard to missionary work. The authorities may mean well by it, but one cannot but think that they are making a great mistake.

If you show to these Mohammedans that you are afraid to meddle with their false religion, how is it likely that they will believe that you greatly estimate the truth and importance of your own? (Hear, hear!)

I concur with the learned author in what he says about the so-called "higher criticism." If you have not a book in your hand—a book every whit as good as the Korân is to the Mohammedan—how can you expect that they will give up their cherished belief in their book? If the Bible be not the Word of God, the power of the missionary is gone, for it comes not with Divine truth, supernaturally communicated, but merely as human opinion, which may be true or false. That sort of thing will never satisfy the heart and mind of man, which yearn for truth, and yearn for authority.

Lieutenant-Colonel MACKINLAY.—Professor Margoliouth has told us of the changes in Mohammedanism, many of which have been largely brought about by the loss of political power.

With the probable fall of Turkey and Morocco in the future, this loss of power will, as he says, ere long be greater still. It is not unnatural to suppose that the condition of the Mohammedan world in general will, in the future, follow the same general lines of change as those which have already appeared in Mohammedan countries (such, for instance, as India), which have been governed for years by alien rulers. In India it is found that the social progress of Mohammedans during recent years has been slow as compared with that of Parsees and Hindoos. The former have shown a relative inaptness to accustom themselves to new surroundings; they have not taken so readily to the arts of peaceful progress, and education is backward among them; only a small portion of the young Indian students in England are Mohammedans. While Parsees and Hindoos are numerous on the Bombay Town Council, the number of Mohammedans is very small. They still, of course, make excellent soldiers. On the other hand, during the last twenty or thirty years

they have, it is believed, become less strict and bigoted in the observance of their religion, and Western ideas have influenced them, though not apparently to the same extent as has been the case among their co-religionists of the higher classes in Constantinople.

With regard to Missions. Mohammedans in India have not hesitated to include the Christian religion among the subjects of their numerous public discussions. I remember thirty years ago meeting Imad-ud-deen in Umritsur in the Punjab; he had been a bigoted Mohammedan, and he was consequently chosen as a champion in a discussion with Christian Missionaries. He procured a New Testament on purpose to find fault with it; but on reading it prayerfully by himself, he was convinced that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he became a Christian. A somewhat similar instance occurred some years later when another discussion took place at Umritsur; a very earnest Mohammedan was again one of the champions of their cause. He was summoned from Afghanistan for the purpose, and was so strict in his religion that he had gone to live there simply because he wished to be under a Mohammedan ruler. As the discussion went on, the Mohammedans lost their tempers, but the Christians kept theirs. This difference of behaviour so impressed the Mohammedan from Afghanistan, that it led him to look further into the subject, and he too became a Christian. Such public discussions must have considerable influence on those who still retain the religion of the false prophet.

It is interesting to compare the condition of things at the present time in such a country as India, with, say, Morocco, where Mohammedans still have political power.

Probably there are those present who could give us facts from personal knowledge, and these facts would help in the formation of a forecast for the future.

Mr. J. HILL TWIGG.—There is a point on which the lecturer might give us some idea, that is, the degree by which Mohammedanism is kept back by extreme veneration for its classical Arabic, and the difficulty that a great part of a man's life must be spent in learning the Korân.

With regard to the extent to which conversion is progressing, I have never known a convert in my experience. I have met a missionary of twenty or thirty years' standing, from Western India, and he told me the same thing. The distinguishing point which

binds Mohammedans together is the unity of God, and they accuse the Christians of believing in the partnership of Christ, which they look upon with extreme contempt. Those are the main points of the religion, and they have, I suppose, a greater hold on the lower orders than the higher. They infuse a Mohammedan spirit that keeps out Europeans, and it is striking what immense military enthusiasm and power a man receives when he becomes a Mohammedan.

Dr. HERBERT LANKESTER.—With regard to the question of conversion, we had at the Church Missionary Society's Hospital at Quetta a lady missionary who went out five years ago. She told us that the only one woman then converted was a Parsee, and now they were twenty-nine in number, most of whom were brought to Christ through that hospital; and she said they were not mere nominal Christians, but were really striving to win their fellow women to Christ, and that some twelve or fourteen women were under instruction.

Some time ago, when there was a rebellion in Uganda, some native troops were sent for to come to Quetta, and they asked for copies of the book. They went up through the different tribes till they got to Uganda. They saw there what an extraordinary change had taken place, and they were told it was through the book that the Christians could read; and they came to our Medical Mission at Quetta to ask for copies of the book. They saw so much difference between the tribes along the coast of Uganda and those they found in the country itself.

Mr. MITCHELL (lay missionary of North Africa).—I think I might say there are hundreds of converts amongst the Mohammedans of Morocco, and yet such a traveller as Francis Macnab, or such a writer as Cunninghame Graham, might travel extensively through the country without coming in contact with them at all, for the reason that they are secluded to some extent. I will not say that they hide their light, but they keep it to themselves among their own people, and the missionary societies have to be very careful in publishing statistics or in mentioning any facts that would lead to the identification of those converts. Many of them are soldiers in the Sultan's army. Some of them have already laid down their lives for Christ; one was not long since flogged to death for refusing to acknowledge Mohammed and to abandon Christianity. So both these statements may be honest, and

Mr. Atterbury is correct when he says that a missionary stated there were many who were converted from Mohammedanism to Christianity in Morocco, and yet you may travel in Morocco without hearing anything of them.

Another thing—I believe that most of these converts are made from the Berbers, who speak a different language, and they would be very careful to hide anything from the Arabic-speaking people with regard to such a thing as the spread of Christianity in their midst.

There is one thing I should like to say in regard to the future of Islam, and that is—we, as Christians, are inclined and glad to think that the political power of Islam is passing away, and to congratulate ourselves that a large part of the Mohammedan world is now under the dominion of Christians. But there is another side to that. Mohammedanism under native rule is decaying rapidly. I have been a missionary for many years in North Africa. In the twelfth century the population of the province of Tunis was some 17 millions. Now, under Mohammedanism, without any rival, and with considerable means of increasing their numbers through piracy and bringing up slaves from the Sudan, what has been the result? With no native Christian church to oppose them, from 17 millions of people living in a rather prosperous country, the population of Tunis is reduced to less than 2 millions, decimated every few years by famine. That is the case in Morocco. I would like to say that Mohammedanism under European powers, such as India and Egypt and other parts, has the opportunity of progressing and has the opportunity of striking its roots deeper under European Christian powers than under native rule.

I cannot, of course, help regretting the action of the Government in Egypt in refusing to allow Christian missionaries to penetrate farther into the Sudan. I think it is the worst thing that could be done from a political and religious point of view. I believe a Gordon Khartoum College might have been established deliberately as a missionary system to propagate Christianity in the Sudan, and that it would have met with respect from the natives.*

* Since the above words were spoken it has been stated in the papers that Lord Kitchener and the Sirdar have allowed the C.M.S. Society to open Christian schools at Khartoum; the rights of parents to prohibit their children receiving religious instruction being respected.—Ed.

Mr. MARTIN ROUSE.—To what Mr. Mitchell has just told us I think I might add a fact learnt from a lecture that I heard Mr. Mitchell give a few years ago, I think—that in Morocco a certain lady was the pioneer in one of the leading towns, and gathered young men around her and led about ten of them to Christ. Three of them went away into the mountain villages of Morocco; and they preached with such real and hearty belief in the doctrines of the Bible, that the inhabitants of three villages renounced Mohammedanism and became Christians. But I remember that at that time we were told not to say much about these things, lest the Christians should become marked men.

The SECRETARY.—I have an extract from a newspaper of the 19th December last, containing a statement regarding the spread of Christianity in India, drawn up by the Committee of the Calcutta Missionary Conference lately held. The whole article is exceedingly interesting, but I would just read one part which bears specially on that subject:—

“The first impression left on the mind by its perusal is that of enormous and rapid success. In 1861 the Asian Christian community in the Protestant Missions of India proper was 138,731; in 1900 it had risen to 854,867, a growth of more than 600 per cent. in forty years. If we include Burmah and Ceylon, where the growth has been less rapid—in Ceylon, indeed, the Christian community has fluctuated curiously—the total number of Native Christians in Protestant Missions has risen from 213,373 in 1861 to 1,012,463 in 1900, a growth of 474 per cent. During the last decade the numbers rose from 671,285 to 1,012,463, or nearly 51 per cent. Satisfactory in itself, this advance compares favourably with the general increase of Native Christianity. The Census of 1901 is sufficiently near in date to afford a means of comparison. In that year the number of Native Christians in India and Burmah was returned as 2,664,313, as against 2,036,590 in 1891, a growth of about 31 per cent. If we disregard the small numbers in Ceylon, a simple calculation shows that whereas the Native Protestant community has increased some 51 per cent. in the decade, the rest of the Christian community has only advanced about 22 per cent. In other words, the rest of the Native Christians, including members of the Syrian Church of Malabar, the remains of the old Roman Catholic districts, and the like, are comparatively stagnant. In the gross the numbers of Indian Christians are still insignificant, compared with the millions of Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, and Animistic worshippers. The Mussulmen increased more than 5,000,000 during the decade; the Buddhists, chiefly in Burmah,

added over 2,000,000 to their adherents, though the number of Hindus and Animistic religionists have actually fallen. Compared with a total population amounting to 294,000,000, the increase of the Christian body seems trifling. But the accelerated movement towards Christianity is overtaking the natural increment of the population. In forty years' time, even if the ratio of increase be not improved, Christianity will have surpassed all other religions but Hinduism and Islam, and will have taken its place as the third religion of India in point of number."

Mr. CHARLES ODLING, C.S.I.—I would say, first, that a large number of the Mohammedans in India with whom I have been acquainted thoroughly believe in Mohammedanism, and are very good business men, as anyone who deals with them soon finds out! (Laughter.)

The second point I would refer to is, that one element I find in India is not so much the unity of the God-head as the brotherhood of mankind. A man admitted to Mohammedanism is the brother of all other Mohammedans.

Rev. G. B. DURRANT.—May I say with reference to the paucity of converts from Western India, that may be due to the fact that there is no really determined effort ever made to bring over Mohammedans; but in Northern India there are some of the best examples of conversion amongst the Mohammedans. It may not be known that in India, in connection with the Church Missionary Society, there are flourishing Christian Churches, ministered to by clergy, converts from Mohammedanism.

The CHAIRMAN.—I was rather struck by the analogy given by the author, where he quotes a missionary as prophesying "that Mohammedanism would probably melt away like a frozen iceberg."

The author says, "a Babi informed me that it [Babism] would tolerate no religion besides itself; and it would seem that the Christians are taunted with blindness in failing to see that the prophecies of their Bible are realized in the Bab, just as they were taunted by Mohammed for their obstinacy in refusing to identify him as the Comforter promised by St. John."

Professor MARGOLIOUTH, in reply, said, I have learnt a good deal from the speeches that have been delivered. I am rather glad to find that, as far as I am aware, no statement of mine has been actually controverted by speakers of experience.

One observation was made on the subject of the Arabic language, and the difficulty of the study of the Korân. That interested me, because a short time ago I was talking to a man of experience, and he said he thought the reason why, in ordinary life, Mohammedans do not get the places they seek, was that a considerable part of their youth was spent in learning the Korân, and he thought it was an useless burden on them, as they did not understand it, to learn it merely by rote, and that that mechanical labour unfitted them for business habits. I have no doubt that what he said was based on correct observation. It seems to me, so far as I am acquainted with Mohammedans, that too much study of the Arabic language does injure them. It seems to be so in Persia, and Turkey, European and Asiatic, where profound knowledge of Arabic is not common. Even in Egypt and Syria the study among Mohammedans is often confined to committing to memory a few books. So I do not think the Arabic language is to blame; but, I believe, they are badly taught it, being taught to learn the words without their meanings.

I understand from friends that great alterations are being made in the way of a better course of study, which may develop better results. (Applause.)

The Meeting then adjourned.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The following communications have been received:—

From the Rev. CHANCELLOR LIAS:—

The Institute is to be congratulated on the able paper by Professor Margoliouth which has been read before it. I send a few remarks by way of supplement.

In the first place, as the late Professor Freeman was never tired of saying, one great reason of the social and political failure of Mohammedanism lies in the fact that it spread, not by discussion, but through the power of the sword. Though it was associated with rapid and remarkable intellectual progress among the races in which it originated, it aimed, not at the elevation of the peoples which it subdued, but at their suppression. With a military

occupation it commenced, and after centuries had elapsed, a military occupation it still remained. This circumstance would alone account for its failure to civilize and to develop peoples as Christianity has done.

Beside this cause, however, there is another ; I allude to polygamy. The ruling classes in Mohammedan countries are brought up in the atmosphere of the harem. Mohammedanism has no respect for woman, but degrades her into the slave of the lusts of man. The future ruler of men passes his infancy and childhood among women, who, as a rule, have neither minds nor morals, and around him he sees nothing but ignorance and intrigue, and from his earliest years he is accustomed to self-indulgence, which, as he grows older, is often of the basest character. He emerges from his seclusion without a single one of the habits which are necessary for a governing race : neither self-control, nor honour, nor honesty, nor justice, nor even mercy. Wherever he goes he is surrounded by parasites ; and peculation and favouritism dog his steps.

The reason for the moral supremacy of Christianity is the grandeur of the moral ideal which it sets before mankind. Here, certainly, "the best is" not "the enemy of the good." Experience has proved that the nobler the moral ideal in a nation, the greater is its moral strength. Still more is this the case when, as in Christianity, religion not only provides the noble ideal, but supplies the strength which enables us to approach to it. Even sceptics like Mill and Lecky have admitted the grandeur and beauty of the character of Christ. And when we add to the inspiring character of His example, the fact that in the case of those who put their faith in Him He inhabits them by His Spirit, we find the secret of the elevation of soul, the loftiness of spirit, which exist where the Christian Church is found. The devotion to duty, the absence of all low and selfish motives which the best men in every Christian State display, is the result of a religion which has for its basis the incomparable Sacrifice of Christ, and the fact of the outpouring of the Spirit of that Sacrifice into all who believe on Him.

From the Rev. G. F. WHIDBORNE :—

It appears to me that Professor Margoliouth's paper is most important, in the view it presents of the outlook of Islam, and the more so because he rather presents facts than draws conclusions.

I venture to think, however, that in comparing it with the endemic Christianity of such countries as, for instance, Abyssinia, he hardly gives sufficient weight to the decadent condition of those churches. Islam is itself largely the product of dead churches; and until those churches are reformed and revived it is not surprising that they do not show much greater vitality than Mohammedanism itself. But where we get a pure form of Christianity the case is different. In India the latest statistics show the rate of increase of Protestant Christianity to be 50 per cent. as against the 20 per cent. of Mohammedanism; while in Uganda, where the two religions started almost together, Christianity has beaten Mohammedanism completely out of the field.

I venture to think, too, that he has underestimated the vital force of Christian missions. He quotes, as a sign of their comparative failure, cases where for years the Missionaries have not made a single proselyte. But the object of Missionaries is not to make "proselytes" as such, but to spread the Gospel. The work in Palestine is, I think, a good exemplification of this difference. There a formal proselyte is rarely made, but yet the Gospel is undoubtedly now permeating the land in a way that seems to predicate, ere long, surprising results.

The dead weights of Moslem tyranny appear to bar the progress of Christianity at present. In the Turkish Empire there is the bar of Government tyranny. In India and Egypt, where that bar has been removed, the bars of social and family tyranny remain. But the spread of Western civilization (a product of Christianity) is distinctly weakening these hindrances. It has yet to be seen what the rate of Christian advance will be when it has "free course": vital Christianity has a power of surmounting bars!

I note with interest that the Professor remarks, "of persons who are virtually Christians while remaining Mohammedans I have heard a good deal." This seems by no means impossible. It is not impossible for human beings to hold at the same time two contradictory beliefs. It is by no means unusual for Christians to grasp the truth, while still professing a large amount of adverse error. And especially in the ill-trained minds of ignorant and child-like races, such as may be found in the East, it is not to be wondered at if the Gospel strikes home to the heart without always gaining logical ascendancy over the intellect.

No doubt this latter phase of mind would, as the Professor so forcibly points out on page 65, if it became widely developed in the Christian churches, produce a most serious paralysis of Missionary work. But the truths of the Bible seldom fail permanently to influence the minds and conduct of those who have opportunities of studying them in search of the truth.

From Dr. THOMAS CHAPLIN :—

The paper of Professor Margoliouth opens up a question of the highest importance and interest, whether regarded from a political, social, or religious point of view. As might be expected from a writer of the author's great ability and attainments, he has treated it in a most lucid and masterly manner, and I could not venture to add anything to what he has said, were it not that daily intercourse with Mohammedans for a quarter of a century, and more or less association with them for nearly double that period, has enabled me to gain some insight into their thoughts, and aspirations, and expectations as to the future of Islam.

About the year 1880 there began amongst Moslems of the upper class in Palestine and Syria a remarkable movement in the direction of Christianity. Young Effendis took to studying the New Testament, and eagerly sought opportunities of discussing with European Christians the proofs and claims of Christianity. Opposition of course arose, and anti-Christian feeling ran so high that the acting British Consul in Damascus was hooted in the streets and had to flee to the coast. The late Sir Richard Burton, who was then on a visit to England, took great interest in the movement, and it was from him I first heard of the strangling in the Great Mosque of a Mohammedan gentleman who was suspected of being a Christian—the Moslem account of the occurrence was that he committed suicide out of remorse. But the movement was not stopped. The unrest continued, until the revolt in Egypt under Arabi Pasha broke out. This was regarded as a defensive Mohammedan effort directed against the ruler of that country, because he was looked upon as being too much under the influence of foreign Christian powers, just as at this moment Bu Hamara is fighting against the Sultan of Morocco for a similar reason. Every strict Moslem was secretly or openly, partially or wholly, in sympathy with Arabi, and no Mohammedan dared let it be suspected that he

had any tendency towards Christianity. Probably nothing that has occurred during the last fifty years has so much tended to hinder the acceptance of Christianity by Moslems as the revolt of Arabi and its suppression by Christian agency.

And here we are face to face with what is perhaps the chief of all the influences which prevent the Moslem from embracing any other religion than his own. He believes it to be the destiny of Islam to dominate the world, not necessarily to convert it, and in his heart of hearts regards the world as in a state of war (Islam against the world), the progress of the Moslem arms being arrested for a time owing to the sins and unfaithfulness of the believers.*

The simplicity and brevity of the Mohammedan confession of faith, and the absolute and indefeasible title to a place in paradise which it assures to those who adopt it, is another cause of the Moslem's strong attachment to his religion, especially when he contrasts it with the elaborate and disputed creeds of the Christian Churches. Probably no religion ever invented makes the way to heaven so easy as the religion of Mohammed.

Another strong point is that there is no order of clergy in the Mohammedan system. From a religious point of view one Moslem is as good as another, unless by his character, conduct, or learning one obtains a reputation for superior sanctity. The Imâms, or leaders of public worship in the mosques, are often small shopkeepers, and in Egypt, in Lane's time, received from threepence to fifteenpence a month for their services. They have no spiritual authority, and may at any time be dismissed and replaced by others: yet, if I am not mistaken, there are instances in which the office of Imâm has continued for several generations in the same family. It is the proud boast of the Moslem that no man can come between his soul and his Lord; that the meanest slave who has accepted the faith of Islam is spiritually on an equality with the highest and noblest.

Doubtless also the indulgent character of the Korân with regard to marriage, divorce, and concubinage are themselves indirectly a

* The famous Hattî-Scherif of Mustapha II, Sultan of Turkey, began with these words: "God, the supreme distributor of all good, has granted unto us, miserable sinner, *the Caliphate of the whole world.*" This was preliminary to making war upon Austria.

hindrance to the Moslem who approaches the subject of Christianity. The strictness of the marriage laws of the Christian Church is regarded by him as a stumbling block opposed to the impulses and requirements of nature, and leading indirectly to unhappiness and sin. He shrinks from it therefore as, in his opinion, antagonistic to the best interests of humanity, and not necessarily because of his own greater tendency to sensual indulgence. According to my own observations, very few Moslems avail themselves to the full of the liberal laws of Mohammed.

These four things form a stupendous barrier to the progress of Christianity amongst Mohammedans, and have to be fully reckoned with in considering the question of the future of Islam.

Of course other circumstances also have great influence. The unattractive character (to the Moslem) of much of the Christianity which he has opportunities of observing, especially the use, not to say worship, of pictures and images in churches, which he cannot distinguish from idolatry; the traditions of the Crusades and their final failure; the fact that Christian Powers are constantly encroaching upon Moslem domains; these all tend to foster in him opposition to and hatred of the doctrines and claims of Christ. It should be remembered that to the Mohammedan his religion stands in the place of patriotism. Few care for their country in the way that Christians care for their country, desiring its material prosperity and intellectual and social advancement. The Moslem only wants to be let alone, and live his own simple, but too often immoral and cruel life, to inhabit a region which he can defend against the hated Christian, with his civilization, and science, and intellectual activity. Nothing is so distasteful to a pious Moslem as any attempt at free inquiry into the grounds of his religious belief.*

Yet there is another side to the picture. Many educated young Mohammedans are questioning with themselves whether this religious system is not in process of decay; whether it is not too

* A well-known writer has observed that Mohammed accustomed the newly converted Moslems to reflect, and accustomed their descendants to surrender their reason. The latter had to regard the doctrine and laws of their religion as for ever fixed. Sismondi, *Chute de l'Empire Romain*, 3rd ed., Bruxelles, 1837, p. 308.

much opposed to the progress of enlightenment to hold a permanent place. To them the ground seems slipping from under their feet. They are thinking, doubting, and fearing what the future may bring.

It is perhaps difficult for us to examine this question with entire intellectual detachment. We are taught, *and believe*, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Possibly a sudden supernatural impulse from above may so influence the hearts and minds of the followers of Mohammed, that they may willingly yield themselves to the obedience of Christ. But this is hardly a subject for discussion at this meeting.

POSTSCRIPT.—In these hasty and imperfect notes I have assumed that if large numbers of Mohammedans were induced to change their religion, it would be to embrace Christianity. Hinduism, Buddhism, or the native religions of China would hardly attract them. Ancestor-worship might have a certain charm for them, but could not constitute a religion. Mohammedans, especially those of Arab origin, have ever shown a remarkable tendency to revere fanatically and follow enthusiastically religious leaders, as in our time, Senoussi, the Mahdi, the Mullah, whom we are pleased to call “mad,” and perhaps Bu Hamara. If what is related be true, the reverence of the early Moslems for their prophet was almost idolatrous. “Is it Mohammed, or the God of Mohammed, you worship?” exclaimed Abubeker, in his anger: “the God of Mohammed liveth for ever, but the Apostle was mortal like ourselves, and is dead.”

From Mr. S. T. KLEIN:—

I have read Professor Margoliouth's paper with great interest: it deals with a subject which is intimately connected with the spread of Christianity; in fact, I believe it can be shown that Mohammedanism owed to a great extent its very existence to the zeal of early Christians. It may seem strange to look upon Mohammedans as themselves an offshoot from the ranks of Christians, and yet in their early days they were, in belief, quite as near as some of the other so-called Christian sects. It is not generally known that the reason why the Mohammedans removed their Kibleh from Jerusalem to Mecca was because they quarrelled with the Jews over their belief in Jesus Christ; at this very time there is in Jerusalem a memorial

of this in the Golden Gate, leading to the Temple area, which has been bricked up by the Mohammedans because they said "no foot shall cross over that portal until Jesus Christ comes to judge the world." This belief in Jesus Christ gradually gave way, and was supplanted by their belief in Mohammed, as he gained in power; but I believe it more than probable that Mohammed would have had no considerable following had it not been that the promulgation of the dogma of the Trinity, and its being misunderstood by the masses, gave Mohammed the handle by which he drew hordes of Semites into his train, and gave them their battle cry, "There is but *one* God." I was struck very much with this idea whilst looking through the old Moorish MSS. at the Escorial Library in Spain. In the account of their fights with the Christians the Moors do not refer to them as *Christians*, but they say, we, the true believers, fought a glorious battle and overthrew with great slaughter the *Polytheists*. It is not pleasant to contemplate how different civilization and religious thought throughout Europe would probably have been now but for the victory of Charles Martell over the Moors at the battle of *Tours*.

As civilization spreads, and races become educated to think individually, the power of Islam must, I think, lose vitality, and in these days of telegraphs, steam engines, postal communication, and spread of knowledge throughout the world by the Printing Press, 200 years does not seem too short a time to see approaching the vanishing point of Islamic perspective, the point where it once more comes into line with Christianity. The tendency of religious thought to become more liberal in the matter of enforcing dogmatic teaching seems to me to be in favour of Mohammedanism eventually being absorbed into Christianity; for as the misunderstanding of a dogma helped to start the great wave of Mohammedanism, which in the sixth to ninth centuries overran the whole civilized world, and Islam became then the exponent of civilization, so Christianity, which has now become the great civilizing force in the world, may, by the better understanding of certain dogmas, become indeed a light clear enough to lighten every Gentile race, and simple enough for every mind to understand.

SECOND POSTSCRIPT BY DR. CHAPLIN.—It is a mistake to suppose that the religion of Mohammed has been wholly, or even

mainly, propagated by the sword. Islam as a *power* has indeed been so maintained and extended, and in every age semi-barbarous peoples have shown themselves more or less ready to embrace the religious system of their conquerors and rulers. The law of the Korân is that no force shall be employed in religion (Chapter 2), and although this law has not always been observed, especially as regards Arabia, for instance, the rule generally in force has been to offer to conquered peoples the alternatives of conversion, tribute, or death.

Another misconception is that Islam does not treat women with respect, and regards them merely as slaves of the lusts of men. This is not so. "Women's rights" were safeguarded by the Korân more than a thousand years before they were much thought of in England. It is true that polygamy is allowed, and divorce permitted upon any or no ground except the will of the husband. But polygamy and facility of divorce had a legal existence under the Mosaic law, and indeed are still practised among those Jews who live in countries where they are free to follow their own social Rabbinical laws. Yet among both Moslems and Jews polygamy and divorce were (and are) hedged about with regulations which render them not so easy and desirable as might seem.

I have known many Mohammedans who treated their wives with tenderness and respect, and were much influenced by them in domestic and even public affairs; the tenderness and respect shown being infinitely greater than is often received by wives in a certain class of society in our own country.

In approaching Moslems with a view to influencing them in favour of Christianity the wise advice of Sale should ever be in our thoughts: "not to give them ill words, and to avoid all reproachful language, which never did good either from pulpit or press."